

Dear Students and Teachers,

Geography is a subject that explores the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The goal of this atlas is to help you investigate this relationship and understand how it has changed over time. As you study the maps, text, and images, ask these essential questions:

- Why do people come to California?
- Why do people settle where they do?
- How do people supply their own needs and the needs of others?
- How do people adapt to and alter the environment?
- How do people move throughout California?

The questions apply to everyone who has lived in California in the past. And they still apply to everyone living here today — including you.

Many people who have studied these topics made this atlas possible. We are friends, united by a desire to help California’s students and teachers form their own answers

to these essential questions. Doing so will put the maps to good use.

In addition to the people listed on the credits page, we need to thank our friends with the Center for Geography Education in Oregon who generously shared content for the map study skills section. The National Geographic Society and the California Global Education Project provided financial support for the development of this edition of the atlas.

As of December 2019, the population of California is estimated to be 39.96 million, making it the most populous of the United States. We come from every corner of the globe. The population continues to grow, but that growth has slowed significantly after several decades of rapid increases. Our state is a world leader in agriculture, digital age technology, education, and environmental protection. Our future prosperity depends on citizens who understand the environmental, cultural, and economic factors that influence our lives. This atlas will help you become an active contributor to our future.

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